

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

UNCLAS STATE 227699

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SN

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE BUS PROJECT

REF: SINGAPORE'S 4041

1. COMMERCE HAS CONTACTED MAJOR U.S. BUS MANUFACTURERS AT EMBASSY REQUEST TO SUGGEST THEY VISIT SINGAPORE AND OPEN DIALOGUE ON BUS QUESTION.

2. ROHR CORP. EXPLAINED IT IN FINAL STAGES PREPARATION PHILIPPINE PROPOSAL WHICH WILL BE MAILED IN NEXT FEW DAYS. FIRM PLANS AWAIT GOP RESPONSE AND, IF FAVORABLE, BILL BIRD INTENDS VISIT MANILA IN EARLY DECEMBER FOR DETAILED MEETINGS ON SUBJECT. BIRD HAS AGREED VISIT SINGAPORE AFTER MANILA IF TRIP DEVELOPS.

3. GENERAL MOTORS SUGGESTS EMBASSY CONTACT ITS REGIONAL
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DIRECTOR, H.V. LEONARD, SUPREME HOUSE, 1010 PENANG ROAD,

SINGAPORE 9, FOR DISCUSSIONS BUS SITUATION. COMPANY WISHES HAVE LEONARD'S RECOMMENDATION BEFORE TAKING ANY INITIATIVE.

4. FORD MOTOR COMPANY INTERESTED IN EMBASSY PROPOSAL, IS REFERRING MATTER TO ITS ASIA PACIFIC OPERATION FOR FOLLOW-UP.

5. AMERICAN MOTORS GENERAL STILL CONSIDERING QUESTION, HAS PROMISED EARLY RESPONSE TO COMMERCE. WE WILL NOTIFY EMBASSY AS SOON AS FIRM'S INTENTIONS BECOME CLEAR.

6. COMMERCE'S EFFORTS ENCOURAGE MANUFACTURERS HAMPERED BY LACK OF INFORMATION RE GOS INTEREST. UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS ON WHICH APPROACH DESIRED (I.E. LOCAL MANUFACTURE, DIRECT IMPORT, IMPORT/LOCAL ASSEMBLY, REGIONAL MANUFACTURE), CREATE DIFFICULTY IN ELICITING FIRM RESPONSE. COMMERCE HAS PASSED ON EMBASSY ESTIMATE THAT 1,000 BUSES REQUIRED IN THREE YEARS WITH ONGOING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL 200 PER YEAR THEREAFTER. HOWEVER, SUBSTANTIATED PROJECTIONS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL FOR PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH INDUSTRY.

7. RE STATEMENT IN PARAGRAPH ONE OF REFTEL THAT SITHAWALLA NOTED ASEAN HAS NO FUNDS FOR CONSULTANTS, WE DID NOT SUGGEST ASEAN RETAIN CONSULTANTS BUT BELIEVES THEIR SERVICES WOULD BE MOST USEFUL TO GOS, WHICH COULD USE THEM AS BASIS FOR CLARIFYING PLANNING ON BUS PROCUREMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, EMBASSY SHOULD BE AWARE BUS MANUFACTURERS WITH WHOM COMMERCE HAS DISCUSSED SUBJECT WERE UNANIMOUS IN CITING PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION COORDINATION AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY IN ATTEMPT TO MANUFACTURE ON A REGIONAL BASIS.
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